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Hand Embroidery

WITH KAT MCTEE

Kat McTee



Lifelong artist and maker Kat McTee resides in Austin, Texas. She teaches embroidery, surface design, silkscreening and color theory to students at the Austin Museum of Art School, Dougherty Art Center, Studio 1408, and The Stitch Lab. Her textile work has been exhibited at the Houston International Quilt Show, Minnesota State Quilt Forum, Rockport Center for the Arts, and Textures Gallery in San Antonio. Kat is a graduate of the Surface Design program at the Southwest School of Art & Craft.

Materials & Supplies

Supply List

Sampler

- Design transfer supplies:
 - Tracing method: Embroidery transfer paper (or dressmaker's tracing paper) and ballpoint pen or dressmaker's tracing wheel
 - Window "lightbox" method: painter's tape and pencil
- Embroidery hoop (recommended: plastic hoop, 6-9" diameter)
- Erasable marker (shown: air- & water- soluble ink marker and Clover erasable marker eraser)
- Fabric: ½ yard or 1 fat quarter (18" x 22") of woven cotton, linen, or cotton and linen blend in a light to medium color
- Floss: Cotton six-strand embroidery floss in at least five colors. For a complete list of the 30 colors that Kat used, see Sampler Floss List on page 5.
- Needles: Embroidery/crewel needles (recommended: sizes 1 through 5)
- Needle threader (recommended: wire-loop style)
- Scissors
 - Fabric shears
 - Small, sharp scissors
- Steam iron for pressing fabric and steaming out hoop marks when finishing
- Downloaded and printed template for the sampler (template is on two pages; match the images and tape together for

the full-size template). You'll find the template along with individual motifs for practice and color and stitch legends for each motif on pages 20-24.

Optional Supplies

- Artist's pre-stretched canvas and lightweight staple gun for mounting an embroidery on canvas
- Chenille needles for embroidering denim, canvas, or other heavy fabrics
- Eyebrow trimmer or seam ripper and sewing needle and thread for removing/replacing pockets on jeans or shirts
- Felt for covering the back of the work when hanging a finished embroidery in the hoop
- Flat plastic floss bobbins for floss management
- Fusible heavyweight interfacing for making patches (shown: Pellon 809 Decor-Bond)
- Iron-on transfer pen
- Lavender and sewing needle and thread for making a sachet
- Metal ring to hold floss bobbins for use on the go
- Permanent markers for marking floss bobbins with color number
- Safety pins to hold excess fabric outside the hoop
- Self-healing cutting mat (to protect table when transferring designs with tracing paper and tracing wheel or ballpoint pen)
- Stabilizers (tear-away or cut-away for knits, water-soluble for denim or canvas, Sulky Sticky shown for pockets)
- Storage box for floss bobbins (shown: translucent plastic) and soft-sided carrier for plastic storage boxes
- Straight pins
- Thread conditioner or beeswax

Color List for Floss Used in Sampler

To recreate the sampler exactly as shown, assemble the following 30 floss colors:

DMC

- 166 Md Lt Moss Green
- 304 Md Red
- 347 V Dk Salmon
- 580 Dk Moss Green
- 721 Md Orange Spice
- 726 Lt Topaz
- 740 Tangerine
- 741 Md Tangerine
- 783 Md Topaz
- 796 Dk Royal Blue
- 798 Dk Delft Blue
- 817 Dk Coral Red
- 825 Dk Blue
- 900 Dk Burnt Orange
- 905 Dk Parrot Green
- 959 Md Seagreen
- 995 Dk Electric Blue
- 996 Md Electric Blue
- 3607 Lt Plum

- 3705 Dk Melon
- 3706 Md Melon
- 3708 Lt Melon
- 3801 V Dk Melon
- 3809 V Dk Turquoise
- 3812 V Dk Seagreen
- 3843 Electric Blue

Aurifloss

- 1243 Dusty Lavender (or DMC 3837 Lavender)
- 2535 Magenta (or DMC 718 Plum)
- 4093 Teal (or DMC 3814 Aquamarine)

Cosmo

- 897 Jade Cream (or DMC 959 Md Seagreen)

Embroidery Floss & Materials Suppliers

- Shop [Craftsy.com](https://www.craftsy.com) for Valdani and Aurifil six-strand floss, Boundless 100% cotton fabric, needles and more
- Anchor Embroidery Floss: [makeitcoats.com/en-us/explore/our-brands/anchor](https://www.makeitcoats.com/en-us/explore/our-brands/anchor)
- Aurifil six-strand cotton floss: [aurifil.com/products/floss](https://www.aurifil.com/products/floss)
- DMC six-strand floss and supplies: [commonthread.us](https://www.commonthread.us)
- Valdani hand-dyed six-strand floss: [valdani.com](https://www.valdani.com)

Materials & Supplies

- Sublime Stitching six-strand floss, patterns and more: sublimestitching.com
- French General six-strand floss (Cosmo by Lecien brand), patterns, brass hoops and more: frenchgeneral.com
- Cosmo by Lecien six-strand Japanese embroidery floss: www.lecien.co.jp/en/embroidery/

Resources

Instructor Website

Visit Kat McTee's website at artcloth.com to learn more about her art and mixed media work, teaching philosophy, blog and more.

Books

- *A-Z of Embroidery Stitches* by Country Bumpkin, compiler (Search Press, 2015)
- *An Embroiderer's Garden: Floral Collection for Hand Embroidery* by Maria Diaz (Tuva Publishing, 2015)
- *Artfully Embroidered: Motifs and Patterns for Bags and More* by Naoko Shimoda (Interweave, 2012)
- *Doodle Stitching: Fresh & Fun Embroidery for Beginners* by Aimee Ray (Lark Crafts, 2007)
- *Embroidered Effects: Projects and Patterns to Inspire Your Stitching* by Jenny Hart (Chronicle Books, 2009)
- *Embroidery Pocket Guide* by Leisure Arts (Leisure Arts, 2010)
- *The Stitches of Creative Embroidery* by Jacqueline Enthoven (Schiffer Publishing, revised and enlarged edition, 1987) This

book is highly recommended, and can often be found in used bookstores or libraries.

Online Stitch Dictionaries

- DMC Stitch Guide: dmc-usa.com/discover/tutorials/embroidery-tutorials/embroidery-stitches/
- Sharon Boggon's Pintangle Stitch Dictionary: pintangle.com/stitch-dictionary/
- Nordic Needle Stitch Dictionary: nordicneedle.net/stitches/

Floss Color Conversion Guides

- About.com online guide to color conversion charts for various brands: embroidery.about.com/od/Embroidery-Resources/tp/Conversion-Charts.htm

Glossary of Terms

- **Bead embroidery** — adding beads, stones and sequins to surface embroidery.
- **Chenille needle** — a hand sewing needle with a large eye that's perfect for stitching on denim, canvas or other heavy fabrics, or stitching with wool or yarn too thick for an embroidery needle.
- **Counted cross-stitch** — a popular form of embroidery stitched in a grid pattern, where each cross-stitch covers the same number of threads.
- **Crewel embroidery** — a form of surface embroidery that uses wool thread and a crewel needle with a large eye.
- **Embroidery floss** — a six-stranded cotton or rayon thread that can be separated into individual strands for use singly or in combination. Embroidery floss comes in hundreds of colors and is sold on spools or in skeins.
- **Embroidery hoop** — a plastic, metal, or wood two-piece ring that holds the embroidery fabric taut and allows stitching with an even tension.

- **Embroidery needle (crewel needle)** — a needle designed for hand stitching with a large eye to accommodate embroidery threads and floss.
- **Metallic floss** — embroidery floss with added sparkle, available in gold, silver, and colors.
- **Perle cotton** — a lightweight cotton thread that is not stranded, used for fine crochet and embroidery.
- **Skein** — a bundle of thread, yarn, or floss. Embroidery floss is often sold in skeins with a small paper wrapper with the color number on the wrapper.
- **Stabilizer** — a thin textile that's applied to the back of the work and stitched through, adding strength and stability. Stabilizers may be wash-away, tear-away, cut-away, or may remain on the back of the work if needed. Some stabilizers have a fusible adhesive allowing it to be adhered to the back of the fabric with an iron.



Stitch Diagrams

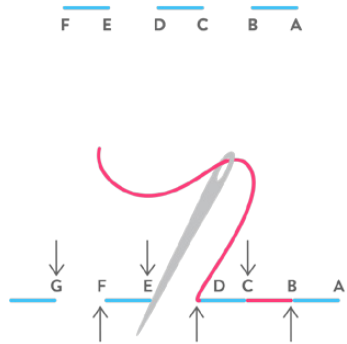
Running Stitch

1. Bring thread up at A
2. Take thread down at B
3. Up at C
4. Down at D
5. Repeat to end of line, keeping stitches and spaces the same size (or varying space between stitches as desired).



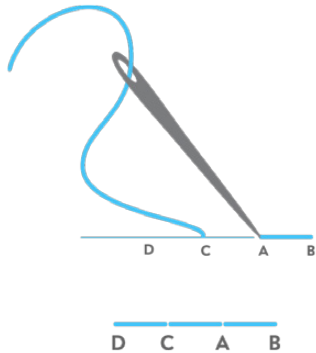
Double Running Stitch

1. Work a line of Running Stitch in one color of floss.
2. Using a second color of floss, fill in the open spaces in the line just worked. Begin by coming up at B, down at C, and continuing in the same manner.



Backstitch

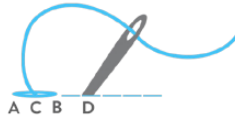
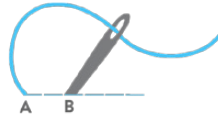
1. If desired, mark a line on the fabric with a pencil or erasable pen.
2. Bring thread up at A, one stitch length from the start of the line.
3. Take thread down at B at the starting point of the marked line, then up at C, one stitch ahead of A.
4. Down at A
5. Up at D, one stitch length beyond the previous stitch.
6. Down at C, and continue in the same manner.



Split Stitch - Traditional Method

1. If desired, mark a line on the fabric with a pencil or erasable pen.

2. Bring thread up at A and down at B, forming a straight stitch.
3. Bring needle up at C, splitting the thread in the straight stitch just made.
4. Take needle down at D to form a second stitch, and up again at B to split the stitch. Continue in the same manner.



Split Stitch - Kat's Method

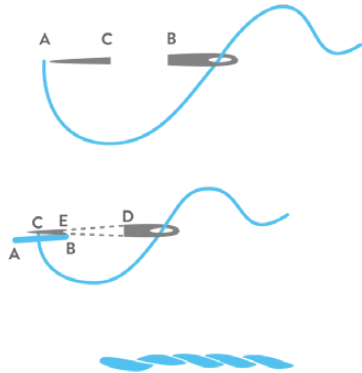
This variation works well with stranded cotton thread, but is not appropriate for perle cotton or crewel wool.

1. If desired, mark a line on the fabric with a pencil or erasable pen.
2. Come up at A, down at B, and up at C to make one Backstitch.
3. Take the needle down at D, splitting the Backstitch just made.
4. Bring the needle up again one stitch ahead, then back down into the previous stitch. Continue in the same manner.



Stem Stitch

1. If desired, mark a line on the fabric with a pencil or erasable pen.
2. Bring thread up at A, at the left (or bottom) end of the design line.
3. Keep thread below the design line, using your thumb to hold it down as you form each stitch.
4. Insert the needle at B and bring it up at C, midway between A and B. Pull the thread through to set this first stitch.
5. Hold the working thread below the design line with your thumb, and insert the needle at D, a half stitch length past the end of the first stitch.
6. Bring the thread up just above B and pull through to set the stitch.
7. Repeat. The stitches will overlap each other halfway as you move along the design line.



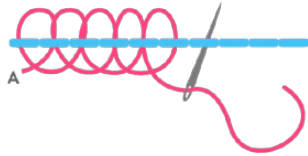
Pekinese Stitch

This is a lovely loopy stitch, perfect for a fancy fill or lacy border. The Backstitch and loops can be the same color or contrasting hues.

1. If desired, mark a line on the fabric with a pencil or erasable pen.
2. Begin by working a line of backstitch with stitches that are not too tiny and not pulled too tightly.
3. Thread a needle with a second color to make the loops. At the left end of the line of Backstitch, bring the needle up

below the first backstitch at A.

Note: For the length of the Pekinese stitch, you'll be weaving the needle through the backstitch but not piercing the fabric again until the line is finished.



Run the needle underneath the second backstitch from the left, sliding the thread between the fabric and the backstitch.

4. Loop back to the left and dive the thread down under the first backstitch. Keep thread looped and not pulled tightly. Continue in the same manner.

Single Cross Stitch

Cross-Stitches can be worked in even lines or with freeform scattered stitches.

1. To create a single cross stitch, bring the needle up at A, down at B, up at C and down at D.



Line of Cross Stitch

1. For an even line of cross-stitches, work all of the first stitches in a line from left to right. Begin by bringing the needle up at A, then down at B; up at C, down at D, and so on.

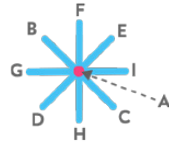
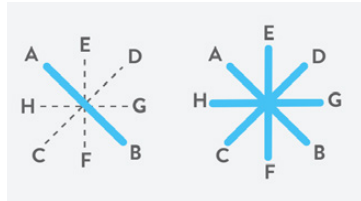


- Return and stitch all of the second "cross" stitches from right to left to complete the row; as shown in the diagram, come up at 1, down at 2, up at 3, and continue in same manner.

Star Stitch & Large Star Stitch

Star Stitch is sometimes called a Double Cross-Stitch. Try varying the lengths of the arms or working one cross over another with a second color of floss.

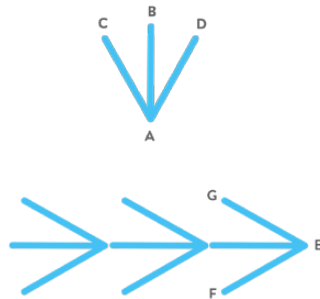
- Bring thread up at A, down at B, up at C, down at D.
- In the same or contrasting color, bring the needle up at E, down at F, up at G, down at H.
- To make a Large Star stitch (arms $\frac{3}{4}$ " or longer), make 8 straight stitches that meet at a center point, as follows: Up at A, down at B, up at C, down at A, up at D, down at A, up at F, down at A, up at G, down at A, up at H, finishing down at H.



Fern Stitch

This stitch consists of three small straight stitches.

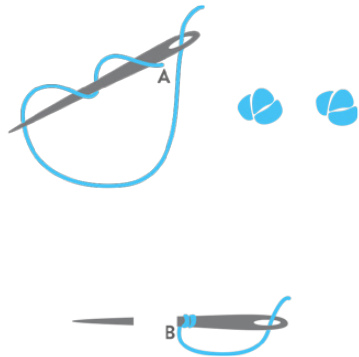
- To begin, bring the needle up at A and down at B to form the center arm.



- Bring needle up at C and down at A, then up at D and down at A. Continue in the same manner.

French Knot

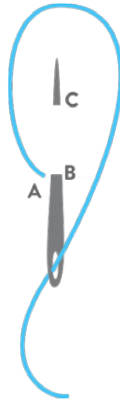
- Bring needle up at A, at the point where you want the knot to sit.
- Holding the needle in your stitching hand, grasping it close to the eye end and keeping it parallel to the hooped fabric, wrap the thread that is coming up from the fabric two or three times around the needle.
- Keeping the needle parallel to the hooped fabric, slide it down close to the fabric to take up any slack thread between needle and fabric.
- Keeping tension in the thread coming off the wrapped needle and securing that thread with your thumb, slide the point of the needle into the fabric at B, right next to A but not in the same hole as A.
- With the needle through the fabric and your thumb keeping tension on the thread on top, take your needle hand to the back of the hoop and pull, twirl and wiggle the needle through the wrap, pulling the thread all the way through the wrap and “popping” it through to form the French knot.



Chain Stitch

Work Chain Stitch from bottom to top of the design line. For a horizontal line of Chain, just turn the hoop sideways.

1. Bring thread up at bottom of design line at A.
2. Allowing the thread to form a loop above where you're working, take the needle down at B (right beside A) and up at C, inside the loose loop of thread. The distance between A-B and C is the length of one link in the chain.
3. With needle above the loop, pull thread, leaving some slack, to create a nice round link.
4. To make the next link, take the thread down at D, inside the first link and right next to point C, again allowing a loop of thread to form.
5. Come up at E, inside the loop, forming the next link. Repeat.
6. To finish the chain, instead of looping the thread around to form another link, take the thread straight down outside the last loop to tack it down.

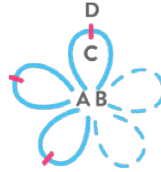


Detached Chain Stitch (Lazy Daisy)

A Detached Chain or Lazy Daisy is simply a single Chain Stitch!

1. Bring the needle up at A (if you're forming a petal, this is the base of the petal). Allow the thread to form a loop and take it down at B, right beside A.

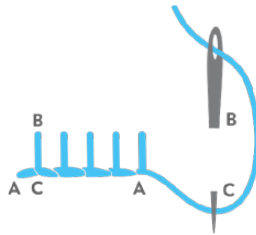
2. Come up at C, inside the loop of thread, and pull the thread, leaving some slack, to form the chain link/petal.
3. To tack down the loop, take the thread straight down at D on the outside of the loop. Continue as needed.



Blanket Stitch

Orient the hoop so that the “arms” of the blanket stitch will point upward from your design line as you work. Blanket stitch can also be worked on the edge of a piece of cloth.

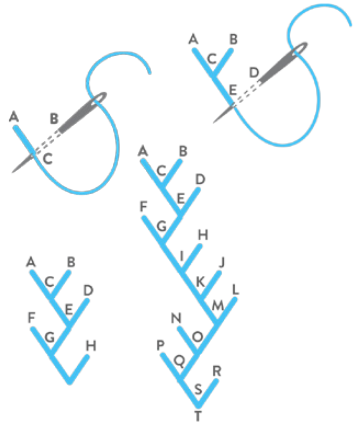
1. Working left to right, bring the thread up at A and down at B. B is the top of your first “arm.”
2. Bring thread up at C on the design line (to the right of A). Catch the thread under the needle before you pull up at C to set the first stitch.
3. For the next stitch, bring the needle down at D and up at E, catching the thread under the needle before pulling to set the stitch. Continue as needed.



Feather Stitch

This is a looped stitch similar to the blanket stitch, but worked vertically.

1. Bring the needle up at A and take it down at B, bringing the tip of the needle up at C without pulling the needle and thread all the way through.
2. Catch the thread (which is extending from the starting point at A) under the needle, then pull the thread up all the way.
3. To continue, put the needle down at D (a point beside and across from C) and repeat the same step, angling the needle down to bring it out at E.
4. As you extend Feather Stitch, you can keep stitching at the same angle or switch directions and branch off to the left (as shown in the lower row of images) forming a series of connecting V's or branches like the arms of a coral or cactus.

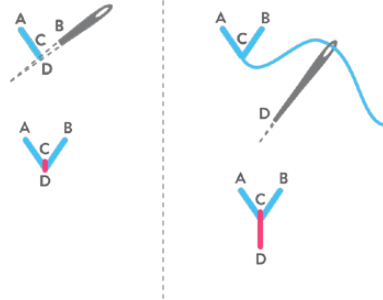


Fly Stitch

Fly Stitch is to Feather Stitch as Lazy Daisy (Detached Chain) is to Chain Stitch — a single-stitch variation of the connected stitch.

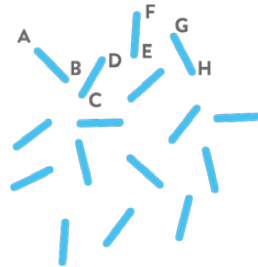
1. Bring the needle up at A and down at B, bringing the tip of the needle out at C without pulling the needle and thread through. Catch the thread (which is extending from the starting point at A) under the needle, then pull the thread up all the way.
2. To complete the Fly Stitch, put the needle down at D, tacking down the arms (wings) of the Fly Stitch to secure it.

The D point can be right on the other side of the A-B thread from C (as shown on the left half of the diagram), or you can extend the thread vertically to make the V into a Y (as shown on the right half of the diagram).



Seed Stitch

Seed Stitch is a very simple stitch, but incredibly versatile for creating fills and shading. It is simply a sprinkling of straight stitches, usually worked in a uniform length of about $\frac{1}{8}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " and scattered across the fabric ground in random directions. Space the Seed Stitches closely for a darker, more complete fill, or keep more distance between them for an effect of a lighter wash of color over the surface.

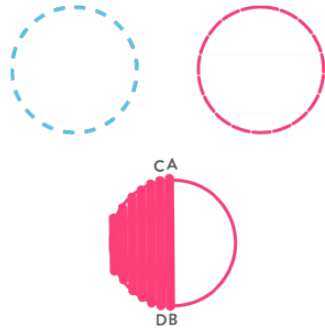


Satin Stitch

I recommend "padding" Satin Stitch with an outline stitched first around the shape for more definition.

1. Draw the motif or shape you want to fill (as shown in top left image in diagram)

2. Begin by stitching the outline of the motif or shape in Backstitch, using the same color thread you'll use for the Satin Stitch fill (as shown in top right image on diagram). When you've finished the outline, leave the thread attached.



3. To keep Satin Stitches even and straight, and to maintain the shape you're covering, start in the middle of the shape and work out to one end, then repeat for the other side. Bring the thread up at A. Come up on the outside of the outline.
4. Take the thread down at B, then up at C and down at D, forming straight stitches that are evenly aligned and very close together, as shown in the lower image in the diagram. Repeat until you reach the edge of the shape, then repeat from the middle to the other end to complete the fill.

Long & Short Stitch

Long & Short Stitch is a variation of Satin Stitch that is effective for covering larger areas and for creating gradations of color across a surface — work a row or two of the stitch in one value or hue, then shift to lighter or darker hues or different colors as you work subsequent rows. The name of the stitch comes from the first row (foundation row) of parallel straight stitches nestled closely together, alternating in length between longer and shorter. Subsequent rows are straight stitches of even size, creating a repeat of the long-short rhythm.

1. Bring the needle up at A, at the lower left corner of the area you wish to fill.
2. Take the needle down at B, up at C, down at D, up at E, down at F, and so on, as shown at upper left.
3. Subsequent rows of stitching will connect to the top of this foundation row, as shown at upper right.
4. Work the stitch with careful precision as shown at upper left, or more loosely and freeform as shown in the lower image.



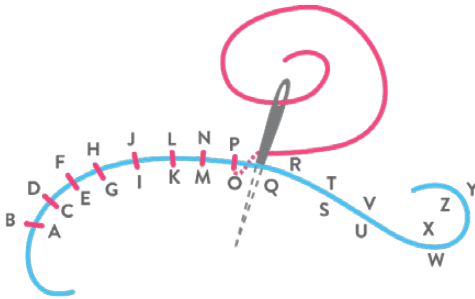
Couching Stitch

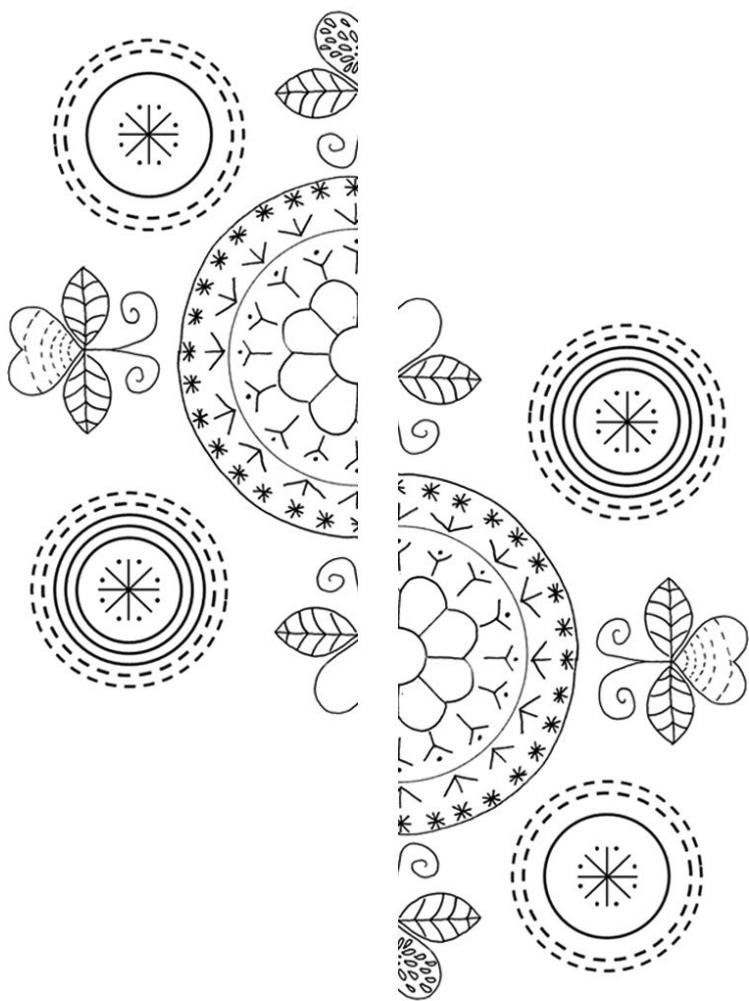
This lovely decorative stitch is a great way to attach heavier threads, cords, or even bits of fabric to a surface. It uses one thread to attach another thread or cord to the fabric. The thread lying on top of the fabric is the couched thread, and the thread stitched to hold the couched thread down is the couching thread.

1. Draw a design line if desired.
2. To secure the start of the couched thread: If the thread is thin enough, thread it through a large needle and bring it up from the back of the fabric at point 1, or make a tiny hole in the fabric and poke it through. Alternatively, secure

the start of the couched thread with a couple of tiny straight stitches using couching thread or sewing thread.

3. Thread an embroidery needle with the couching thread. Lay the couched thread across the fabric, and bring the needle up alongside it at A. Cross directly over the couched thread and put the needle down at B, tacking down the couched thread.
4. Come up at C, down at D, repeating this as you coax the couched thread into the desired pattern across the surface. For a tight curve or corner, space the couching stitches closer together to help secure the shape.
5. At the end of the row (or thread), take the needle to the reverse of the fabric at B and finish with a knot on the back.





Sampler Stitch & Color Legends

Central Flower:

Center: Satin Stitch (DMC 783 Md Topaz)

Petal Outline: Chain Stitch (Aurifloss 2535 Magenta)

Petal Fill: Seed Stitch (DMC 721 Md Orange Spice
& DMC 3607 Lt Plum)

Flower Border: Fly Stitch

(DMC 580 Dk Moss Green,
& DMC 166 Md. Lt Moss Green)

Flower Buds: French Knots

(DMC 995 Dk Electric Blue,
& DMC 959 Md Seagreen)

Inner Circle: Chain Stitch

(DMC 3801 V Dk Melon)

Inner Border: Fern Stitch

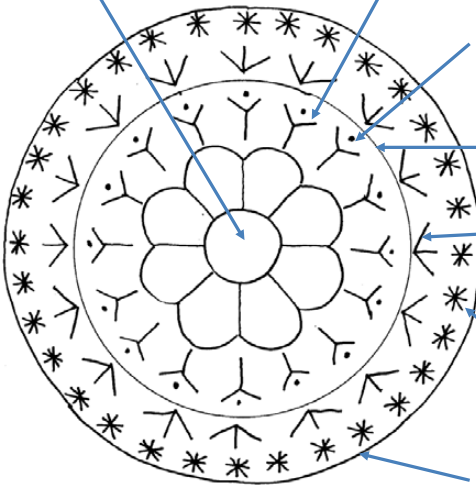
(DMC 721 Md Orange Spice)

Outer Border: Star Stitch

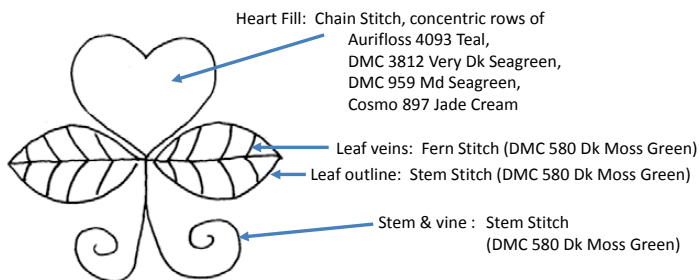
(DMC 3809 V Dk Turquoise)

Outer Circle: Blanket Stitch

(Aurifloss 2535 Magenta)



Sampler Stitch & Color Legends

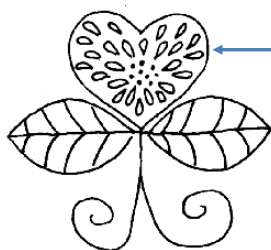
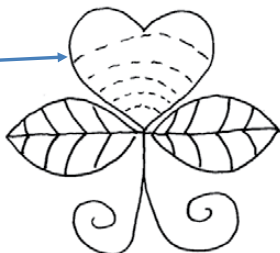


Heart fill: Long & Short Stitch

DMC 347 V Dk Salmon
DMC 3801 V Dk Melon
DMC 3705 Dk Melon
DMC 3706 Md Melon
DMC 3708 Lt Melon

Outline: Split Stitch

DMC 3708 Lt Melon



Heart fill: Outline: Stem Stitch

Aurifloss 2535 Magenta

Center: French Knots

DMC 726 Lt Topaz

DMC 740 Tangerine

Petals: Detached Chain Stitch

DMC 3801 V Dk Melon

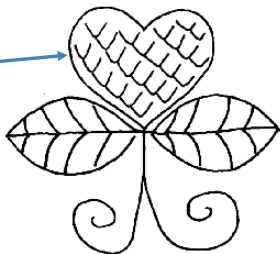
DMC 900 Dk Burnt Orange

Heart fill: Outline: Back Stitch

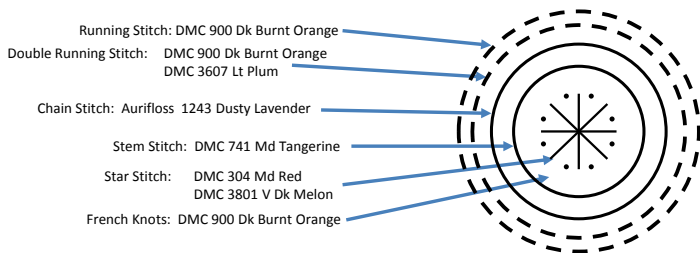
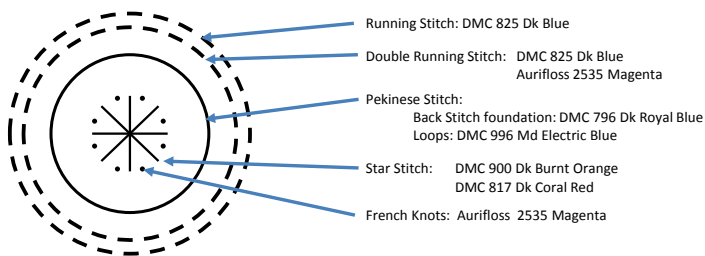
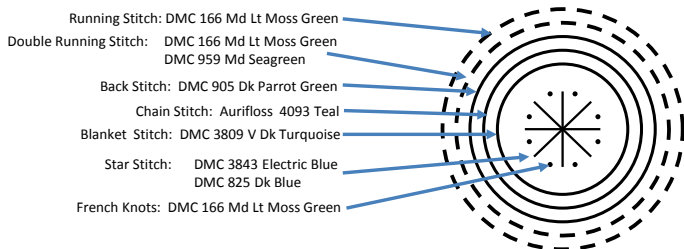
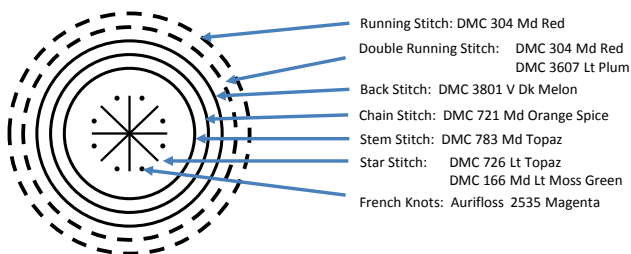
DMC 796 Dk Royal Blue

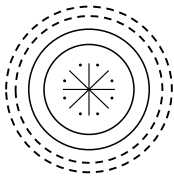
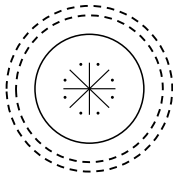
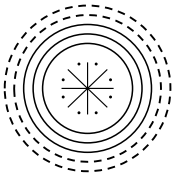
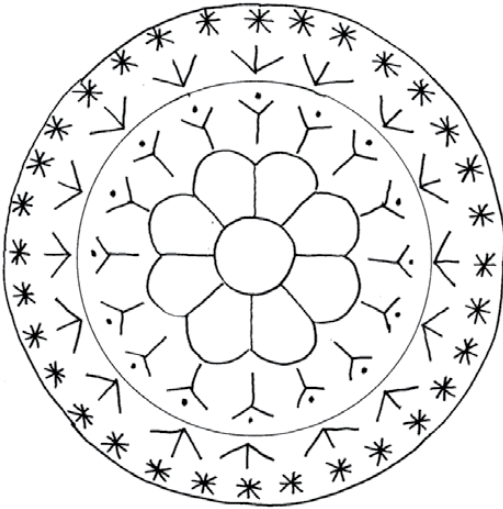
Fill: Feather Stitch

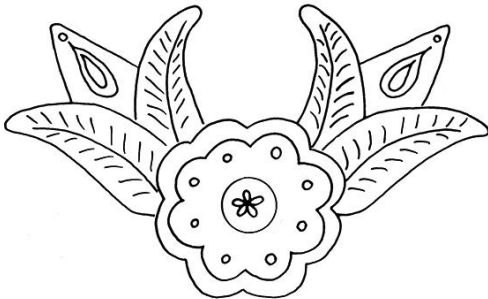
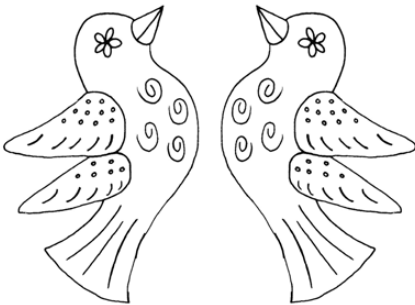
DMC 798 Dk Delft Blue



Sampler Stitch & Color Legends







These letters would be too small to stitch successfully by hand.

THIS POINT SIZE IS LESS FRUSTRATING TO STITCH!

(Even In Mixed Upper/Lower Case.)

Script fonts are a classic choice for monograms.

K but the thin lines of this particular script make it more challenging to stitch than

K this choice or *K* this modern script

If you are dead set on stitching a thin-line script font, consider

K going big!

You can also make your stitched line heftier than the printed font - do that as you stitch, or use a pen to play with beefing up your letters on paper before you transfer them.

Consider working with a relatively simple, chunky font, and making it beautiful with stitched embellishment inside the outlined letter form: **LOVE**

Make it big, change the outline style, decorate it!

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

Try These Craftsy Embroidery Classes

Ready for more embroidery? Try these beginner-and intermediate-level Craftsy classes for more hand-stitching fun.

- *Bead Embroidery* with Myra Wood
- *Bead Embroidery: Beyond the Basics* with Myra Wood
- *Cross-Stitch: Basics & Beyond* with Jeannette Douglas
- *Embroidering Texture & Dimension by Hand* with Sue Spargo
- *Stitch It With Wool: Crewel Embroidery* with Kristin Nicholas

Credits

The following patterns, photographs and embroideries are shown in the class with permission.

Patterns and Photographs

- Vintage-style rooster with guitar by Aunt Martha's #3753 Barnyard Happenings; published by Colonial Patterns, colonialpatterns.com.
- Photographs of chicken and sewing machine by Jeanine Attaway.

Embroidery Works by Niku Arbabi

- Knotty (embroidery)
- Girl With Scissors (piecework with stamping and embroidery)
- Diagram 6A (embroidery)
- Poison (embroidery)
- Valve (embroidery)
- Eye (embroidery)
- Sparkle Tummy (embroidery)
- Cheers (cross-stitch)
- Self-Care (cross-stitch)


Screen Print by Stacey Martin Smith

- Screen print on denim (designed by Stacey Martin Smith, embroidered on denim by Kat McTee)

Embroidered Garments


- Vintage embroidered Levi's green denim overshirt from the collection of Katherine Greden

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If questions come up during your class,
we're here to help.

Just send us a note at help@craftsby.com or
visit us at www.craftsbyhelp.com.